

Abstract

Since the beginning of the 20th century, Ethiopia's cities have been growing in size, expansion and number. While master plans were drafted since the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie, construction and settlement processes have largely remained incremental and based on everyday practice. The discipline of urban studies is only in an early phase of gaining insights into the contingent nature of the social, economic and cultural implications of urbanisation in the country's cities, but has to assume a widening spectrum of urban practices within and among the towns. However, since 2005 Ethiopian politics has started drafting an urban policy to introduce new standards of development in the cities. Recently "Integrated Development Plans" (IDPs) have been introduced as planning instruments and form the policy base for resettlements and large scale restructuring in many of the Ethiopian cities.

The topic of the research presented here is the investigation of the relation of these statutory planning practices with the local everyday urbanisation. Therefore, Bahir Dar, the capital of the Amhara National Regional State and located on the mouth of the Blue Nile on Lake Tana, was chosen a case study location. The study is comprised of a theoretical review on urbanisation in Africa and two empirical parts. The first empirical part is a review of the historical urban development of Bahir Dar to the planning policies currently in place. The second empirical part is an evaluation of primary data on everyday urbanisation collected from the four sub-case sites in Bahir Dar. Fieldwork was conducted in a number of site visits over a period of four years from 2009 to 2013. In a multi-tool approach data on urbanisation practice was collected through documentation, review of policies and archival records, key-informant interviews, semi-structured interviews with residents and cross-section mapping. Four sub-cases in contrasting neighbourhoods founded in different time periods were studied to gain insights into the implications and mutual influences of current statutory planning and everyday rationales of the urbanising city and vice versa: The inner city, the textile area, an informal village and the Bahir Dar University main campus.

The dissertation aims to specify the insights on urbanisation rationales of residents in the four sub-case site neighbourhoods and how they relate to state-

driven development policy. The inner-city houses a wide diversity of dwellers and serves as an arrival point, while current development plans seek to re-shape this area into a commercial zone. The residential area erected by workers of the textile mill has turned into an established middle-income neighbourhood with formal house ownership. An informal settlement now inhabited by the fourth generation of settlers accommodates livelihoods based on urban agriculture and city based job-opportunities and is facing eviction to make way for a commercial centre. The university's expansion is part of a priority programme, which provides students with fully serviced campus life but little exposure to Bahir Dar city.

Based on the empirical findings, the thesis concludes that informal, traditional and incremental urbanisation strategies continue to make up large parts of the urban fabric and provide housing for population groups that do not have access to formal housing provision. However, contrasting the IDP projects with evidence from the sub-cases reveals that these particular everyday urbanisation practices have not found sufficient consideration in urban development strategies and lack the negotiation power with state authority that economically better equipped projects display. This furthers tendencies of socio-economic segregation.

To counter these tendencies, ideas for policy revision placing urbanisation at its centre and towards contextualised planning and inclusion are, hence, conceptualised. In order to support inclusiveness for low-income practices of urbanisation, this thesis suggests implementing pilot projects aiming for synergies between statutory and everyday urbanisation. The city centre is designated to experiment with “mixed- use zoning”, the textile settlement is proposed as a site for “arrival structures and temporary housing”, the informal village can be declared an “incremental building zone” and the university can reconnect to Bahir Dar city via public programmes termed “networks of innovation”. Thereby the proposals are intentioned to look for possibilities of cooperation between stakeholders to benefit the residents while attracting projects improving living conditions and urban facilities in Bahir Dar.